

# ***AMERICAN HISTORY AND CIVICS INITIATIVE***

A Request for Proposals (RFP)

Sponsored by

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting

Washington, D.C.

The American History and Civics Initiative represents a major commitment by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to use its educational mandate, reach, and creative capacity to address critical shortfalls in middle and high school students' knowledge of American history, our political system, and their roles as citizens. To do so, the American History and Civics Initiative will award \$20 million in grants to forge unique and sustainable partnerships to create innovative, multi-platform projects that measurably improve learning.

## **I. Introduction**

Young people's knowledge of even the fundamentals of American history and civics has been on a steady and well-documented decline for a generation or more and, by most standards, has remained at an unacceptable level for some time. For example, the American Council of Trustees and Alumni surveyed students at the 55 most elite colleges and found that only 60 percent were able to correctly place the Civil War within a fifty-year spread; and 63 percent did not know what the Emancipation Proclamation actually granted. According to the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress—the “nation’s report card”—only a quarter of twelfth-graders could name two ways in which the U.S. Constitution limits government power.

We believe that this condition represents a national crisis with potentially grave consequences for our nation's future. Post-9/11, the stakes are higher than ever. It is crucial that Americans coming of age during the war on terrorism become engaged and responsible citizens. Our nation’s future leaders need a clear idea of who we are, what we stand for, and where we are headed.

In recent years, there have been many history programs—from public television’s own award-winning series to documentaries on the History Channel and other cable outlets. Some have been excellent, and many have been disseminated to classrooms. Despite these efforts, knowledge about American history and civics has continued to decline. It is time to try something new.

Public television can and must help address this national crisis. From public broadcasting’s start, education and innovation have been central to its mission. The Public Broadcasting Act of 1967, which created the Corporation for Public Broadcasting,

spoke of the need for creative risk-taking in providing instructional and educational services. In signing the bill into law, President Lyndon B. Johnson said "the time has come to enlist the computer and the satellite, as well as television and radio," to improve American education, and added: "We must consider new ways to build a great network for knowledge—not just a broadcast system, but one that employs every means of sending and storing information that the individual can use."

CPB believes the time is ripe to direct some of the spectacular recent advances in new media, particularly interactive capacities, toward the improvement of civic literacy and knowledge of American history. These new technologies—including the internet, video games, and other interactive platforms—combined in imaginative ways with established technologies, such as documentary film and broadcast television, have the potential to advance learning if developed and coordinated directly with educators and their curriculum needs.

## **II. Objective**

**The objective of CPB's American History and Civics Initiative is to catalyze new partnerships among public television, filmmakers and other content developers, the education community, the high technology sector, and others to design new, groundbreaking media projects that measurably improve the learning of American history and enhance civic participation among middle and high school students.**

CPB welcomes proposals that enhance the teaching and learning of key events, persons, documents, movements, ideas, values, and principles that are fundamental to who we are as Americans.

Partnerships could include an array of players including—but not limited to—a public television station or consortium of stations; production companies; experts in new technologies; high technology companies (web, new media, computer games, etc.); curriculum developers; textbook publishers; think tanks; educational/service professionals or associations; national, state, or local educational boards; parent organizations; teachers and/or teachers unions; or history and civic-related non-profit groups.

A key part of CPB's mission is to serve the underserved. We welcome projects that are designed to appeal to ethnic and racial minorities as well as to young people attending sub-standard and underperforming schools.

High expectations for corporate and non-public television buy-in and co-funding are incorporated in each grant-making stage. In addition, we expect rigorous standards and testing to be incorporated into every proposal to measure learning results.

New partnerships, new links and models will be necessary to achieve our far reaching goals. Implicit in our objective is that creative and bold out-of-the-box ways of thinking and doing business are essential. While a public television broadcast must be a component of any American History and Civics Initiative project, it cannot be the only

component. The American History and Civics Initiative seeks innovation and creativity, but results and effectiveness above all.

### **III. Grant Stages, Schedules, and Modifications**

CPB expects to award a relatively small number of larger grants and intends to commit \$20 million over the next three years. American History and Civics Initiative grants will be awarded on a competitive basis, generally in three grant phases as noted below:

Phase 1. Research and Development. Proposal deadline: **Tuesday, November 1, 2005.** CPB estimates it will award 10 to 12 R&D grants in the \$50,000-\$250,000 range. Most R&D proposals will be funded at the low- to mid-range of this spectrum. CPB may support up to 100 percent of R&D, but proposals that commit co-funding will likely be given preference.

Phase 2. Prototype Creation. Proposal guidelines, criteria, and deadlines for this phase will be determined in consultation with R&D grantees on an individual basis. CPB estimates it will award 6 to 8 prototype creation grants in the \$350,000-\$750,000 range.

Phase 3. Production and Implementation. Proposal guidelines, criteria, and deadlines for this phase will be determined in consultation with prototype creation grantees on an individual basis (or in select cases with R&D grantees). CPB estimates it will award 3 to 5 production and implementation grants in the \$2-4 million range.

Modifications to RFP. CPB may modify the deadlines, criteria, guidelines, and requirements contained in this RFP without notice and at its sole discretion. CPB will post modifications and updates at [www.cpb.org/grants/historyandcivics](http://www.cpb.org/grants/historyandcivics). In addition, CPB reserves the right to extend any deadline for *individual* applicants at CPB's discretion when such an extension is deemed by CPB to be in the interests of achieving published American History and Civics Initiative goals. CPB also reserves the right to add or eliminate a grant making stage described above at its discretion when CPB deems such action to be in the interests of achieving published American History and Civics Initiative goals. All modifications and extension of deadlines must be confirmed in writing by CPB to be valid.

### **IV. Eligibility Requirements**

\* Any public or private, non-profit, educational, or commercial entity is eligible to apply for a R&D grant as a "Managing Partner" under the terms of this RFP. Likewise, any public or private, non-profit, educational, or commercial entity is eligible to serve as a subordinate "Key Partner" in a proposal.

\* Only R&D grantees may apply for American History and Civics Initiative follow-on "Prototype Creation" (Phase 2) or "Production and Implementation" (Phase 3) grants.

\* All video products intended for broadcast developed under this proposal must conform to the PBS broadcast-quality specifications found at <http://www.pbs.org/producers/guidelines/>.

- \* All R&D proposals must follow the proposal format described in Paragraph VII.

## **V. Proposal Guidelines and Criteria**

Every proposal submitted to the American History and Civics Initiative must address all the following points, listed by topic area:

### ***A. Audience, Need, Standards, and Formative Research***

- \* The American History and Civics Initiative is targeted exclusively at middle and high school students in the U.S. Each project must target some portion of that audience—but not necessarily all of it. Projects should be designed to appeal to young Americans in all their diversity, including ethnic and racial minorities.

- \* Activities can be conducted during and/or after school hours, on and/or off-school grounds, and in and/or out of classrooms.

- \* All projects must be national in scope. While American History and Civics Initiative programs will likely be tested on a local, regional or state basis, all projects must be adaptable to a national scale.

- \* Each proposal must demonstrate the need for the project. Proposals must offer evidence that teachers want and will use the product. Proposals must describe how teachers and students will use the product and how it was informed by and will integrate into the curriculum. Establishing need, even for a R&D grant, may require applicants to interview teachers and other end users, or conduct a formal gap analysis of the marketplace or other market research.

- \* As applicable, applicants should compare their product to others on the market and explain how theirs is different and/or superior.

- \* In order to produce the most educationally effective material, each grantee, from the outset, should develop a plan for ongoing formative research and use the results to refine the project. This may involve a series of focus groups with teachers and other end users, classroom trials, or other kinds of product testing.

- \* While it is not required that all projects correspond to established curricula and educational standards, applicants should explain how their project relates to such standards and to the curricula most commonly used in schools. The American History and Civics Initiative wants to ensure that projects are central to the educational needs and goals of a wide array of schools to ensure that effective models and platforms can be adopted broadly, or nationally.

- \* In general, project goals, strategies, methods, implementation, and testing should be informed, developed and monitored with direct and ongoing input from practicing teachers.

### ***B. Public Television and Other Media***

\* Each project must incorporate broadcast via public television, but not as the only component. Though not required, we anticipate that successful American History and Civics Initiative applicants will incorporate new interactive technologies in the models and methods proposed (the Web, interactive computer programs, video games, cell phones, etc.).

\* Each applicant must incorporate the resources and expertise of one or more public television stations in the design and implementation of their project, including the station's experience in K-12 education, teacher training, research, educational outreach, and program distribution.

### ***C. Content and Production Style***

\* All projects should address a specific aspect of American history and/or American civics. Projects may incorporate *both* American history and civics, but it is neither requested nor required. The content could include an entire year/semester curriculum or focus on one or more topics in American history or civics.

\* While no issue or topic is off limits, in keeping with our goal to improve students' knowledge of fundamental aspects of American history and civic life, we expect proposed projects to focus on core issues and topics—those that are already part of the school curricula. For example, appropriate areas of American history include the American founding, the Constitution, the Civil War, the civil rights movement, America's involvement in World Wars I and II, and the Cold War era, among others. American civics includes governmental structures, political campaigns, civic participation, etc.

\* All materials must be accurate and informative. As we aim to educate rather than indoctrinate, no issue should be whitewashed. All sides of issues should be explored.

\* CPB anticipates that interactivity and the integration of new media with curriculum and curriculum goals will be a central feature of all successful proposals.

\* Many worthy multimedia projects in the past have neither captured the interest of students nor improved learning. Young people live in a media-saturated environment. We are looking for creative but no-nonsense methods and models which will break through the clutter and spark the imagination of young people. While the subject matter may be traditional, we seek innovative and effective approaches to communicating it.

### ***D. Outcomes: Summative Research and Measuring Effectiveness***

\* Project effectiveness in improving learning will be central to the American History and

Civics Initiative. In order to succeed projects must result in measurable learning outcomes that (1) improve student learning of key aspects of American history, and/or (2) enhance students' civic participation. Therefore, a testing and evaluation methodology that demonstrably measures a project's learning results must be incorporated into all projects.

- \* Each grantee is required to design and incorporate its own plan for measuring project effectiveness and outcomes.

- \* In addition, CPB intends to engage an independent research firm to conduct summative research and evaluation to measure project effectiveness and outcomes in parallel to the grantee. Grantees will be required to work with that firm to the extent necessary, in all aspects of project evaluation, as determined by CPB.

### ***E. Partnerships***

- \* CPB anticipates every project will include a mix of partners—specialists in content, production, broadcast, curriculum, education, new media, distribution, pedagogy, and technology. (CPB is not to be regarded as a “partner” for purposes as we consider “partnerships” herein.)

- \* Partnerships could include, among others: television producers, testing and/or educational standard experts, teachers unions/associations, state/local school system administrators, think tanks/educational groups, history and civics-related organizations, public television stations, parent associations, video game designers/manufacturers, universities or schools, etc.

- \* Applicants must identify the “Managing Partner” (the formal applicant and proposed grantee institution) as well as the subordinate “Key Partners” in their proposal.

- \* Proposals must clearly and specifically explain the respective role and contribution of each affiliated partner. In addition, proposals must include a brief and signed “letter of intent” from each Key Partner to the Managing Partner outlining that partner’s commitment to and function in the project, including a statement verifying any co-funding commitment or intention. CPB does not require that any Key Partner make an exclusive commitment to any proposal, project, or team. However, no applicant may serve as the Managing Partner in two project proposals.

- \* Partnerships should be streamlined and purposeful—each with a specific role that contributes significantly to the proposal’s strategy and program.

### ***F. Financial Models and Business Plans***

- \* A significant level of non-CPB funding is expected at each grant stage (beginning with R&D) with an increasingly higher share being contributed/invested in the follow-on stages by outside funders. Appropriate funders might include national, state, or local government agencies, foundations, or corporations—including technology partners

(computer manufacturers, textbook publishers, game developers, cell phone companies, software developers, internet companies, etc.).

- \* Each applicant must provide data, plans, and financial models that demonstrate the project's long-term viability, including information on potential funding sources during and after CPB's involvement in the project.

- \* The level of matching funds invested by partners (such as high tech partners) will weigh heavily in CPB's assessment of the partners' commitment to the project as well as the project's viability and sustainability.

- \* CPB is looking for projects that will be financially sustainable over the long term. Projects with investment and ongoing revenue streams will have a significant advantage to receive American History and Civics Initiative funding.

## **VI. R&D Proposal Content**

The R&D period is an opportunity to explore inspired ideas; refine the proposed concept; research the content; study the audience's needs; strengthen the partnerships; develop the strategies, systems, and mechanisms necessary to successfully implement the project; and design the prototype. At a minimum, and in addition to the specifications outlined above in Section V, "Proposal Guidelines and Criteria," the R&D proposal should:

- \* Outline the project's vision and concept. Explain the goals, strategy and plan to develop the content and link television and other multimedia in the learning process. The outline should identify and describe (1) the content's theme/material; the content to be produced, provided, and distributed; (2) the television and other multimedia and internet/interactive components to be used; and (3) the specific targeted audience (specific age group and geographic location). Either existing or newly developed content may be incorporated into the project.

- \* Identify the executive producer, producer, and director of any content to be developed and produced; their biographical summaries and credits should be included in the attachments section of the proposal.

- \* Specify the research and development work to be done during the R&D phase, including but not limited to development of systems and methods, finalizing arrangements with partners and advisers, planning research into concept effectiveness, interviewing teachers and completing a needs assessment, conducting archival photo and film research, refining the concept through focus groups and formative research, and writing treatments and/or scripts. Explain how the proposed project's product and/or strategy is unique, needed, and viable.

- \* Describe the qualifications of the applicant and key personnel. Identify, describe and explain the capabilities/capacities of the managing partner and the key partners to successfully develop and implement the proposed project. Identify and explain the respective roles, relationship, and contributions of the managing partner and the key

partners to demonstrate how they can successfully develop and implement the proposed project. Identify any additional outside advisers who will assist with content, pedagogical research, distribution, or otherwise. Include, as attachments, biographical summaries, credits, and CVs of all principals.

## **VII. R&D Proposal Format**

Proposals should be prepared in twelve-point Arial, Times New Roman, or Courier font, with a one-inch margin on all sides and with pages numbered. Proposals should not be bound.

Proposals should include the following components, organized and labeled as follows:

**A. Proposal Title Page**, to include:

Project Title

Applicant (Managing Partner) name, affiliation, and contact information including email address

**B. Proposal Narrative**. Proposal narratives should be 15-20 pages. At a minimum, the narrative text of each proposal should contain the following sections, preferably in this order:

**A. Executive Summary** (a concise, inclusive project summary of 6-8 sentences)

**B. Background and Need**

**C. Vision and Objectives**

**D. Strategy and Plan** to develop the content and link television and other multimedia in the learning process. (Identify and discuss the featured American history and/or civics topic/theme, and describe the content to be produced and the curriculum to which it relates, and how public television broadcasts and other interactive technologies will be integrated into the learning process.)

**E. Managing and Key Partners' Roles**

**F. Standards, Measurements, and Testing Methods**

**G. Project Timeline**

**C. Proposal Attachments**. At a minimum, proposals must contain the following separate attachments (1-9):

**1. Financial Plan (co-funding and sustainability)**

**2. Fully Allocated Detailed Budget**

**3. Capacity Statement of the Managing and Key Partners**

**4. Organizational Chart showing the relationship of the partners.**

**5. Flow charts and block diagrams as necessary to demonstrate project systems and methods.**

**6. Letters of Agreement from all Key Partners, including a statement**



verifying all co-funding intentions.

**7. Biographical Information and Credits of the executive producer, producer, and director of any content to be developed and produced.**

**8. Signed CPB Submission Release Form,**  
<http://www.cpb.org/grants/tvrelease.html>.

**9. Any additional attachments as desired by applicant.**

**D. Submitting a Proposal to CPB.** An original and two unbound copies of the American History and Civics Initiative proposal, accompanied by the signed release form, must be express mailed, **postmarked by November 1, 2005**, to:

*American History and Civics Initiative*  
The Corporation for Public Broadcasting  
Attn: Ms. Melissa Maher, Television Programming Department  
401 Ninth Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20004-2129

In addition, an electronic copy of the proposal (only in MSWord) must be e-mailed to: [History.Civics@cpb.org](mailto:History.Civics@cpb.org). Do not mail any material on diskettes or CDs (including the proposal) unless specifically requested by CPB. Proposals and other submitted materials will not be returned.

## **VIII. Rights**

\* American History and Civics Initiative applicants are bound by the CPB Terms Applicable to Proposals, located at <http://www.cpb.org/grants/proposalterms.html>.

\* All R&D grant recipients will be required to execute an American History and Civics Initiative R&D Agreement, which will be posted at [www.cpb.org/grants/historyandcivics](http://www.cpb.org/grants/historyandcivics) by mid-May. The R&D Agreement terms and the standard CPB Terms and Conditions, <http://www.cpb.org/grants/termsandconditions.html>, are not negotiable.

\* Before submitting a proposal, please read the Terms and Conditions found at <http://www.cpb.org/grants/termsandconditions.html>. *CPB will not tailor individual contracts. Provisions are not negotiable.*

\* R&D grantees must agree that for two years after executing the R&D grant agreement, it will not transfer or license to any other party any rights in the funded project's activities or products without CPB's advance written consent, regardless of whether CPB chooses to fund the project beyond R&D.

\* In light of the fact that CPB cannot anticipate the nature of individual projects and project components—including methods, systems, products, partnerships, etc.—applicants and grantees should be prepared to negotiate rights consistent with CPB's role. With regards to ancillary revenue, when generated as a result of commercial exploitation of CPB-funded projects and their derivatives, applicants and grantees should be aware

that CPB will share in the revenues consistent with CPB policy. CPB seeks to apply its ancillary revenue policy in a manner that encourages, not discourages, commercial exploitation of those projects, products, and their derivatives. CPB welcomes commercial investment and investors in the American History and Civics Initiative.

## **IX. Pre-Proposal Briefings**

American History and Civics Initiative staff will conduct several pre-proposal briefings to meet with potential American History and Civics Initiative applicants to further discuss CPB's goals, intentions, and expectations with respect to this initiative. These events will be open to the public and are scheduled as follows. Those who wish to attend are kindly asked to follow RSVP procedures as noted below.

### **Washington, DC: Friday, April 29, 10:30am-12:00pm**

Corporation for Public Broadcasting 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Board Room  
401 9<sup>th</sup> St., NW, Washington, DC 20004

\*RSVP deadline: 5pm EST, Tuesday, April 26

### **San Francisco: Tuesday, May 3, 3:00-5:00pm**

Renaissance Parc 55 Hotel, Barcelona Room  
55 Cyril Magnin Street, San Francisco, CA 94102 (Phone 415-392-8000)

\*RSVP deadline: 5pm EST, Wednesday, April 27. Co-hosted by KQED.

### **New York: Monday, May 23, 1:00-3:00pm**

Thirteen/WNET  
450 West 33rd Street, 6th floor, New York, NY 10001

\*RSVP deadline: 5pm EST, Wednesday, May 18. Co-hosted by Thirteen/WNET.

### **Chicago: Friday, May 27, 3:00-5:00pm**

Hotel Monaco, Paris Room  
225 North Wabash, Chicago, IL 60601

\*RSVP deadline: 5pm EST, Wednesday, May 25

The Washington DC pre-proposal briefing will be audio taped. Individuals unable to attend one of the scheduled meetings may request a copy of the taped proceedings by sending a request to [History.Civics@cpb.org](mailto:History.Civics@cpb.org).

**RSVP Procedures.** All RSVPs will be confirmed exclusively through e-mail communications. To attend a pre-proposal briefing, please RSVP to: [rsvp-proposalconference@cpb.org](mailto:rsvp-proposalconference@cpb.org). **Indicate which briefing you plan to attend by city and the number of attendees in the subject line of your RSVP confirmation.** (Sample subject line: New York/ 2 attendees.) In the message text, please write each attendee's name; organizational affiliation; title; postal and e-mail address; and telephone number. Due to space considerations, no more than three persons may represent an individual organization.

## **X. Proposal Review Procedures**

Proposals will undergo internal and external review by CPB staff and outside experts. Outside review will be provided by expert readers and an American History and Civics Initiative Advisory Board, comprising distinguished historians, education scholars, technology experts, teachers, and others. CPB will also form a Station Advisory Group, comprising station managers, programmers, and education executives, for guidance on utilizing the resources of public television and member stations. When formed, members of both groups will be listed at [www.cpb.org/grants/historyandcivics](http://www.cpb.org/grants/historyandcivics).

The review of American History and Civics Initiative proposals is expected to follow these general steps:

Step 1. Each proposal received will be acknowledged by email upon receipt.

Step 2. Each proposal will be reviewed and evaluated internally at CPB according to the criteria and guidelines listed herein.

Step 3. Proposals deemed most viable will be reviewed by at least two outside experts selected by CPB. At this stage, CPB will request work samples from selected applicants; work samples will be reviewed by staff and, possibly, by expert reviewers as well.

Step 4. Following consultations with expert reviewers, CPB program staff will invite select applicants to visit CPB in Washington, D.C. to present their proposal in person. R&D applicants will be expected to attend this meeting at their own expense.

Step 5. Advanced proposals will be presented to the American History and Civics Initiative Board of Advisors and to the Station Advisory Group for their input and advice.

Step 6. Selection decisions will be announced on a rolling basis as individual contracts are awarded. Applicants not selected for funding will be notified within approximately 30 days after the final determination of all funding.

## **XI. Reporting**

R&D grantees will be invited to CPB midway through the R&D to present a report to discuss their progress and findings and determine if any mid-course corrections will be necessary. This expense will be incorporated into R&D grant agreements/budgets.

At the conclusion of R&D, the grantee will submit all deliverables in accordance with the grant agreement including, but not limited to, (1) a summary report of the results of R&D and (2) a follow-on prototype (or implementation and production) proposal as appropriate and requested by CPB. A full, detailed accounting of expenditures must be submitted at the conclusion of R&D.

Following receipt of deliverables, select R&D grantees (including key members of the team) will be invited to CPB to discuss follow-on activities. CPB may invite outside experts to join the discussion. At this time, CPB will also review criteria for the next funding proposal and respond to questions, requests, or special considerations.

## **XII. Phase II: Prototype Creation**

The Prototype Creation phase will be an opportunity for R&D grantees to create a segment or a sample of the final program and to test the effectiveness of the program with students, teachers, and parents. The requirements of the prototype creation proposal will largely depend on the specific project. However, this proposal will likely contain many of the basic elements as the production activities, but on a more limited scale. Precise prototype creation proposal requirements, formats, and deadlines will be determined on an individual basis for each American History and Civics Initiative grantee.

Prototype creation proposals will be accepted only from R&D grantees. In some instances, CPB may waive the prototype creation phase and invite R&D recipients to submit proposals for production and implementation.

## **XIII. Phase III: Production and Implementation**

Production and Implementation is the final phase of the American History and Civics Initiative, during which the complete program will be produced and rolled out, including television broadcast, web and new media launches, and large-scale educational dissemination. Therefore, each applicant will produce a program to be offered for broadcast via public television as part of a larger project.

After submitting all deliverables for prototype creation, each grantee must submit an implementation and production proposal in order to be eligible for further funding.

Precise implementation and production proposal requirements, formats, and deadlines will be determined on an individual basis for each American History and Civics Initiative grantee.

## **XIV. RFP Q/As and Modifications**

Questions regarding this RFP and the American History and Civics Initiative should be submitted in writing to [History.Civics@cpb.org](mailto:History.Civics@cpb.org).

A summary of relevant (but not privileged) questions and answers, as well as updates and modifications to this RFP, including deadline changes, will be posted at [www.cpb.org/grants/historyandcivics](http://www.cpb.org/grants/historyandcivics).